

**California Commission on Teacher Credentialing
Committee on Accreditation
Accreditation Team Report**

Institution: Azusa Unified School District

Dates of Visit: March 28-30, 2011

Accreditation Team

Recommendation: Accreditation

Rationale:

The unanimous recommendation of Accreditation was based on a thorough review of the institutional self-study; additional supporting documents available during the visit; interviews with administrators, faculty, candidates, completers, and local school personnel, along with additional information requested from program leadership during the visit. The team felt that it obtained sufficient and consistent information that led to a high degree of confidence in making overall and programmatic judgments about the professional education unit's operation. The decision pertaining to the accreditation status of the institution was based upon the following:

Common Standards—

The entire team reviewed each of eight Common Standards and determined whether each standard was met, not met, or met with concerns. After reviewing the program documents, evidence at the site, and conducting interviews with all stakeholder groups, the site visit team found that all eight Common Standards are **Met**.

Program Standards –

The Azusa Unified School District program standards were preliminarily aligned. Discussion of those findings, verification of evidence, and interviews were conducted at the site. Following discussion, the team considered whether the programs standards were met, met with concerns, or not met. The team found that all six program standards are **Met**.

Overall Recommendation –

The site visit team completed a thorough review of program documents, program data, and candidate *Formative Assessment for California Teachers* (FACT) portfolios. Interviews were conducted with program leadership, district administrators, school site administrators, the Human Resources director, credential analyst, support providers, candidates, completers, and Steering Committee members. As a result of this thorough review, and the team finding that all Common Standards and Program Standards are **Met**, the team unanimously recommends a decision of **Accreditation**.

On the basis of this recommendation, the institution is authorized to recommend candidates for the following Credentials:

Advanced Credentials
General Education (Multiple and Single Subject) Clear

Staff recommends that:

- The institution's response to the preconditions be accepted.
- Azusa Unified School District be permitted to propose new credential programs for approval by the Committee on Accreditation.
- Azusa Unified School District continues in its assigned cohort on the schedule of accreditation activities, subject to the continuation of the present schedule of accreditation activities by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

Accreditation Team

Team Leader:	Corinne Muelrath Sonoma County Office of Education/North Coast BTSA
Common Standards Cluster:	Patricia Wick University of Phoenix
Program Sampling:	Michele Ortiguerra Ventura County Office of Education
CTC Consultant	Cathy Payne

Documents Reviewed

Common Standards Report	Candidate Journey
Candidate Files/Portfolios	Agendas
Handbooks	Support Provider application
Program Assessment Feedback	Support Provider MOU
Biennial Report/ Feedback	Management Meeting minutes
Professional Development Calendar	Intake Form
Advisement Documents	District non-discrimination policy
Job Descriptions	ECO application
State Survey data	Credential Analyst communication
Midyear Survey data	Rubrics
Program Budget	Understanding by Design materials
Organizational Chart	Essential Elements of Effective Instruction documents
Azusa Induction Website	Steering Committee Minutes
Job descriptions	
Candidate Completion data	

Interviews Conducted

	Team Leader	Common Standards Cluster	Program Sampling Cluster	TOTAL
Candidates	3	3	8	14
Completers	6			6
Site Administrators	6	10	13	29
Institutional Administration	5	4	2	11
Program Specialist	1	1	1	3
Professional Development Providers	3	2	2	7
Support Providers	3	13	4	20
Advisory Board	5	19	7	31
Credential Analyst	1			1
Support Staff	1	1	1	3
TOTAL				125

Note: In some cases, individuals were interviewed by more than one cluster (especially faculty) because of multiple roles. Thus, the number of interviews conducted exceeds the actual number of individuals interviewed.

Background information

Azusa Unified School District is located 27 miles northeast of Los Angeles. The 11,100 students who attend AUSD schools are composed of 90% Latino/Hispanic, 5% white, 1% African-American, 1% Asian, and 1% mixed. In addition, 76% of the students are on free and reduced lunch. The district also includes an alternative education site as well as an extensive Adult Education Program.

The district recruits teachers from across the nation, however, many of the teachers and administrators are former students of the district. A sense of belonging and a culture of pride exists in the district.

To ensure the success of beginning teachers, the district offers an extensive training program with support from veteran teachers. The dedicated classified staff provides vital support services for students. Technology skills are incorporated into the District's curriculum. Every school has a computer lab and every classroom has access to the Internet.

Education Unit

Azusa Unified School District is composed of 11 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 2 high schools, and one alternate education site. There are currently 10 candidates enrolled in the BTSA/Induction program. In 2009-2010, 17 candidates completed the program and were recommended for credentials. The program currently has 13 support providers and 3 professional development providers, as well as a program specialist who is the program director.

Table 1
Program Review Status

Program Name	Number of program completers (2009-10)	Number of Candidates Enrolled or Admitted (10-11)	Agency or Association Reviewing Programs
Induction Program	17	10	CTC

The Visit

The Azusa Unified School District site visit team included two team members and a team lead. During the weeks prior to the visit, team members reviewed program documents and evidence and engaged in a telephone conference to discuss their completed Common Standards Planning Instrument and the Program Sampling Planning template, to develop potential questions for the site visit. The team met at the Azusa Unified School District (Support Provider Annex) where evidence was reviewed and interviews conducted. The site visit began on March 28 and ended on March 30, 2011.

Common Standards

Standard 1: Educational Leadership

Standard Met

The institution and education unit create and articulate a research-based vision for educator preparation that is responsive to California's adopted standards and curriculum frameworks. The vision provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance and experiences, scholarship, service, collaboration, and unit accountability. The faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant stakeholders are actively involved in the organization, coordination, and governance of all professional preparation programs. Unit leadership has the authority and institutional support needed to create effective strategies to achieve the needs of all programs and represents the interests of each program within the institution. The education unit implements and monitors a credential recommendation process that ensures that candidates recommended for a credential have met all requirements.

Findings:

The Azusa Unified School District (AUSD) BTSA Induction Program utilizes current educational research practices such as the mentoring model of Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman, and teaching strategies from books such as Unwrapping the Standards by Larry Ainsworth and Understanding by Design by Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins. The program vision is: "Ensuring a highly effective teacher in every classroom for every student every day." All stakeholders clearly articulated this vision and understood that the focus of the program was to prepare the best teachers possible for the students of AUSD. Through the *Formative Assessment for California Teachers* (FACT) system, candidate completion evidence and portfolios demonstrate strong evidence of attention to California's adopted standards, which includes the current *California Standards for the Teaching Profession*, BTSA Induction Program Standards and the state-adopted academic content standards.

As evidenced by participant portfolios and stakeholder interviews, candidates work with trained support providers to reflect on their day-to-day teaching practice as it aligns to the district goals and to the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession*. The entire focus of the program is on improved teaching practice of new teachers. A by-product of the program is improved teaching of support providers. As one support provider said, “This program has changed my life. I am a better teacher because of the BTSA program.” Support providers receive ongoing training and guidance related to effective instructional practices and coaching strategies. Through end-of-program exit interviews, stakeholders and program leaders are able to determine candidate and program effectiveness, which supports the program accountability.

The overall management of the Azusa Induction Program is the responsibility of the program director, a member of the AUSD management team under the auspices of the Human Resources Department. The program director involves the management team, principals, and a leadership Steering Committee in the governance of the program and shares data collected from a variety of sources with the Steering Committee and support providers. As evidenced by discussions with the district Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent, district administrators have a depth of knowledge and understanding of the program goals.

Interviews with the Human Resources Assistant Superintendent, indicated that AUSD has entrusted the program director with the overall management and implementation of the program. However, there is an expectation that the BTSA Induction program aligns its goals with the district goals, as demonstrated by the focus on Essential Elements of Effective Instruction (EEEE), a district-wide professional development focus. Interviews with all stakeholders indicate that the program director is a strong, caring, and organized leader. She is inclusive and has moved into a highly respected and valued role in the district. Her leadership of the BTSA Induction program has made a positive impact on the entire district such as leading the principal and district office management team meetings and preparing a cadre of highly qualified support providers and coaches to help all teachers in the district.

Support providers are educated about induction program completion requirements (SP Training Calendar) and they monitor candidates’ progress and completion of all formative assessment documentation, along with the program director. Candidates are required to summarize and demonstrate having met minimum expectations of induction during a portfolio review and exit interview. Once they have completed all requirements, the program director completes the 41-Induction form and informs the district credential analyst of the completion so the credential analyst can recommend to CCTC for the clear credential. The credential analyst follows up with the candidates, multiple times if necessary, until the clear credential has been issued.

The education unit implements an assessment and evaluation system for ongoing program and unit evaluation and improvement. The system collects, analyzes, and utilizes data on candidate and program completion performance and unit operations. Assessment in all programs includes ongoing and comprehensive data collection related to candidate qualifications, proficiencies, and competence, as well as program effectiveness, and is used for improvement purposes.

Findings:

The Azusa BTSA Induction program has implemented an assessment and evaluation system that facilitates continuous program improvement. Multiple measures are used to systematically assess the program's effectiveness and candidates' competence. Midyear surveys, state surveys, and monthly leadership team meetings demonstrate the impact the continuous improvement model has made for the program.

Data is collected on both unit operations and candidate performance. This data is analyzed and utilized to make appropriate program adjustments to better meet the needs of the candidates, while remaining aligned to the *Common and Program Standards* as well as the accreditation cycle of program review.

Multiple stakeholder interviews and documentary evidence demonstrate stakeholder involvement in the improvement process. The Leadership Team meets regularly to discuss and reflect on annual assessment information and information from portfolio reviews. Informal data collection presents itself through conversations within and outside of regularly scheduled meetings with support providers and site administrators. Stakeholders shared anecdotes about the program improvement process including, "We have made changes in the program based on the data. These changes included modifications in our professional development program, technology, and how we meet with each other."

Interviews with program staff, Steering Committee members, and review of documents indicate that the AUSD BTSA Induction Program has an assessment system for ongoing program evaluation and improvement. Each year in the spring, various stakeholder groups, including candidates, support providers, and site administrators, take the BTSA State Survey through the website. Local surveys are conducted through Survey Monkey with the same stakeholder groups at midyear (usually in February). At the end of the second year, candidates also complete an online exit survey with a focus on program effectiveness. Candidates, support providers, Steering Committee members, and staff discussed how the exit interview process has changed, based on feedback from ongoing and annual assessment data.

The monthly Leadership Team meetings provide time to discuss program effectiveness, candidate performance, and improvement of professional practice. The support providers work in "teams" to provide coaching for their participating teacher(s) and each other. During interviews, both beginning teachers and support providers stated, "I met with my support provider (or beginning teacher) regularly. We had ongoing conversations that made a difference in my performance. I would not be the teacher I am today if it weren't for the support I received." A review of beginning teacher files verified that candidates are receiving regular and ongoing feedback (candidate logs, lesson plan feedback, and FACT documentation).

The Biennial Report verified that the program analyzes data from multiple measures (state survey, exit survey, support provider documentation) and uses that data to improve the program. The program director, using feedback from multiple sources, added additional support for program completion into their monthly meeting plan. All stakeholders demonstrated comprehensive program knowledge.

Biennial reports, conversations with program staff and Steering Committee members, and a review of FACT documents, demonstrated an ongoing and comprehensive data system that supports candidate qualifications, proficiencies, competence, and program effectiveness. After a comprehensive review, it is evident that the commitment to a quality program, based on the needs of the candidate, is the focus of all stakeholders.

The program regularly evaluates data and makes changes as needed. Recent data driven program changes include an additional professional development day for support providers to ensure understanding of their research-based lesson plan model, Understanding by Design.

Standard 3: Resources

Standard Met

The institution provides the unit with the necessary budget, qualified personnel, adequate facilities and other resources to prepare candidates effectively to meet the state-adopted standards for educator preparation. Sufficient resources are consistently allocated for effective operation of each credential or certificate program for coordination, admission, advisement, curriculum and professional development, instruction, field-based supervision and/or clinical experiences, and assessment management. Sufficient information resources and related personnel are available to meet program and candidate needs. A process that is inclusive of all programs is in place to determine resource needs.

Findings:

The Azusa Unified School District, Local Educational Agency for the Azusa BTSA Induction Program, provides the necessary budget, personnel, facilities, and other resources to effectively prepare candidates to meet state-adopted standards for educator preparation.

Facilities include a dedicated meeting room and office space for the program director, support providers, and the office clerk. Within these facilities are sufficient resources to support all aspects of program implementation, including required office equipment and technology tools necessary to support the ePortfolio system for the collection of candidates' evidence of growth in practice and program completion.

The program is staffed with a full-time program specialist (director) and .75 FTE clerk. During interviews, beginning teachers and support providers stated, "We are so lucky to have a dedicated facility for BTSA. We have a place to meet and have professional development activities." A review of the program budget demonstrated adequate resources for meetings, training, staff, professional development, technology utilization, and assessment.

The BTSA Induction program is housed under the Human Resources department and BTSA Induction staff work closely with the Credential Analyst and Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources' secretary to identify and enroll eligible candidates in the program. A variety of

personnel from the Educational Services department support the professional development of the program director, support providers, and candidates.

Interviews with support providers, beginning teachers, staff, and a review of files provided evidence that candidates are being advised, receive professional development, and meet regularly with their support provider, staff, and program director. The program provides systematic and ongoing support for candidates. During interviews, staff, candidates, and support providers stated, “We utilize the program director, the Support Provider Annex, and the materials in the room.” The Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources demonstrates support of the program by providing adequate staff and funding and by participating in assessing candidate competence.

The program director develops an operational budget and submits it to the Assistant Superintendent of Business Services. The Assistant Superintendent reviews the budget and ensures that adequate funding (from multiple sources) is allocated. A review of the program budget demonstrated adequate personnel and information resources to meet program and candidate needs, including a website, BTSA user group, books, and materials. The BTSA budget includes substitute release days for beginning teachers and support providers. Also included in this budget are line items that allow for coordination, admission, advisement, on-going professional development of the program director, support providers and candidates, field-based supervision and clinical experiences by support providers, and assessment management needs. Interviews with stakeholder groups verified that adequate funds are available.

Through a review of documentation and interviews with program leadership it is evident the scope of work for the program director includes oversight for the program design, implementation, budget, staffing, and allocation of resources for support of the candidates in the program.

Standard 4: Faculty and Instructional Personnel

Standard Met

Qualified persons are employed and assigned to teach all courses, to provide professional development, and to supervise field-based and/or clinical experiences in each credential and certificate program. Instructional personnel and faculty have current knowledge in the content they teach, understand the context of public schooling, and model best professional practices in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service. They are reflective of a diverse society and knowledgeable about diverse abilities, cultural, language, ethnic and gender diversity. They have a thorough grasp of the academic standards, frameworks, and accountability systems that drive the curriculum of public schools. They collaborate regularly and systematically with colleagues in P-12 settings/college/university units and members of the broader, professional community to improve teaching, candidate learning, and educator preparation. The institution provides support for faculty development. The unit regularly evaluates the performance of course instructors and field supervisors, recognizes excellence, and retains only those who are consistently effective.

Findings:

Qualified personnel are hired for full implementation of the all aspects of the induction program. A full-time administrator, with the title of *Program Specialist, Staff Development*, is assigned to the role of program director. Support providers work in teams to support candidates and each other. Additionally, a support provider is designated as a professional development provider.

Instructional personnel and faculty have current knowledge in the content they teach, understand the context of public schooling, and model best professional practices in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service.

The program director is responsible for hiring and evaluating professional development providers and support providers, using criteria aligned with the Induction Program standards and the AUSD hiring process, which allows for the most qualified candidates to be selected. This criteria includes an application process, CLAD certification, permanent teaching status in AUSD, a minimum of five years of classroom teaching experience, effective communication skills, knowledge of a wide range of instructional strategies, leadership experience working with other teachers, and intermediate to advanced educational technology skills. The hiring process includes a panel interview, letters of recommendation, and a team observation of a lesson.

The program director, support providers, and all professional development providers are fully equipped to demonstrate the highest level of practice in the areas for which they are responsible, and training is provided to best meet each individual's needs. All support providers are trained and have a deep understanding of the use of the formative assessment system, especially in the area of clinical supervision of instruction. The BTSA training calendar and training agenda demonstrate the depth and complexity of the professional development offered. Support providers discussed the currency of their training and the relevance to their daily practice.

Since support providers are experienced teachers with the AUSD, they are well connected to the diverse needs of the students. Support providers receive training on the context of teaching through the FACT program which increases their capacity to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Responsibilities of the support provider are communicated at the beginning of the hiring process and reinforced in a Memorandum of Understanding. Support providers meet monthly as a Leadership Team. The program director facilitates these meetings which focus on collaboration, professional development, and reflection. Professional development focuses on opportunities to build upon knowledge and skills linked to the most effective beginning teacher support.

Support providers, are evaluated based on multiple measures including: adherence to the expectations included in the Memorandum of Understanding, observations of collaborative conversations with candidates by the program director, and survey results on support provider performance. The program director evaluates support providers by reviewing mid-year surveys, state surveys, and an analysis of support provider observation feedback to their participating teachers. If the program director identifies an individual weakness, the support provider receives one-on-one coaching with the program director. If the program director identifies an issue with the entire team, professional development in that area is scheduled at the next monthly meeting.

Support providers meet weekly with their beginning teachers to provide ongoing feedback and support. Candidates and support providers both stated that this collaboration is essential to their growth and development. Support providers also attend many BTSA-sponsored events that provide opportunities for collaboration to improve their skills in teaching, candidate learning, and educator preparation. Support providers are expected to use the resources developed for induction workshops, to continue their support of candidates on lesson and unit planning, including the provision for accommodations for students with specific needs.

The program director collaborates with principals and provides professional development training for the management team. Ongoing professional development for support providers includes academic content standards, frameworks, and accountability systems. Understanding by Design unit planning tools, Essential Elements of Effective Instruction lesson planning templates, and Unwrapping the Standards techniques are among the resources support providers use to reinforce their work with candidates in the formative assessment system.

An annual recognition event is held, celebrating the support providers growth and commitment to beginning teachers. They also attend the annual recognition event for candidates.

Standard 5: Admission

Standard Met

In each professional preparation program, applicants are admitted on the basis of well-defined admission criteria and procedures, including all Commission-adopted requirements. Multiple measures are used in an admission process that encourages and supports applicants from diverse populations. The unit determines that admitted candidates have appropriate pre-professional experiences and personal characteristics, including sensitivity to California's diverse population, effective communication skills, basic academic skills, and prior experiences that suggest a strong potential for professional effectiveness.

Findings:

Candidates are admitted on the basis of employment in an appropriate educational position, possession of a valid preliminary teaching credential, and other Commission-adopted requirements. The Azusa Unified School District adheres to federal and state hiring practices, and is an equal opportunity employer.

The program has the following process to verify that all candidates hold a preliminary credential and qualify for participation in the BTSA Induction program:

- At the point of hire, the credential analyst generates an intake form for those who have presented evidence of possession of a preliminary credential.
- The intake form is forwarded to the program director, who contacts the candidate with information on participation in the program and instructions on how to register on the BTSA website.
- The program director follows up with the registration by checking back on the BTSA website to ensure that the candidate's eligibility has been verified.

Multiple measures are used in the admission process that encourages and supports applicants from diverse populations. Interviews with human resources and site principals verified that candidates are admitted based on the above criteria.

As part of this process, site principals interview candidates to ensure that the beginning teacher possesses the attributes necessary to successfully teach California's diverse population and have the characteristics to be successful, effective teachers.

Qualified members of the unit are assigned and available to advise applicants and candidates about their academic, professional and personal development, and to assist each candidate's professional placement. Appropriate information is accessible to guide each candidate's attainment of all program requirements. The institution and/or unit provide support and assistance to candidates and only retains candidates who are suited for entry or advancement in the education profession. Evidence regarding candidate progress and performance is consistently utilized to guide advisement and assistance efforts.

Findings:

The program director and staff work collaboratively with Human Resources personnel to advise candidates of their credential completion and professional development requirements. At the point of hire, the district credential analyst works with new teachers to verify their credential(s) and eligibility for Induction. She completes the Intake/Eligibility Form and forwards it to the induction program director. A review of program documents and stakeholder interviews verifies that support providers are assigned as soon as possible, and the support providers and candidates attend an orientation meeting where program requirements are explained. Each teacher receives the BTSA Induction Handbook. During orientation, candidates are also advised of the Early Completion Option, and the eligibility requirements/criteria for early completion are explained.

Throughout the year, the program director and support providers are available to advise candidates of their completion status, as well as provide guidance with professional development activities that would best suit their individual needs. To guide the candidate's completion of all program requirements, the program director and support providers support the completion of *Formative Assessment for California Teachers* (FACT) activities as well as district-aligned professional development. Program stakeholders commented that they felt a strong commitment from program leadership for ongoing support. Timelines and expectations of the progress on formative assessment documentation are communicated at workshops, which candidates and their support providers attend. Detailed information is also provided at induction sessions and on the program website.

Candidates submit electronic portfolios (which were available for review at the site visit) to the program director for detailed review each year. Through interviews with participants and a review of program documents, it was evident that participants receive ongoing, individualized support from the program director, induction staff, support providers, and professional development providers with an intense, laser-like focus on improved teaching skills. At the end of the second year of induction, all candidates complete an exit interview where they reflect on the two years of learning and demonstrate their understanding of the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the various teaching strategies and skills required of them. If candidates do not complete the exit interview successfully, they are asked to re-do portions of their presentation. Graduates of the program described the exit interview as a culminating, learning experience that put the two years of induction into perspective and made them feel proud of their work.

Standard 7: Field Experience and Clinical Practice

Standard Met

The unit and its partners design, implement, and regularly evaluate a planned sequence of field-based and clinical experiences in order for candidates to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support all students effectively so that P-12 students meet state-adopted academic standards. For each credential and certificate program, the unit collaborates with its partners regarding the criteria for selection of school sites, effective clinical personnel, and site-based supervising personnel. Field-based work and/or clinical experiences provide candidates opportunities to understand and address issues of diversity that affect school climate, teaching, and learning, and to help candidates develop research-based strategies for improving student learning.

Findings:

The Azusa BTSA Induction Program utilizes the *Formative Assessment for California Teachers* (FACT) system. Candidates demonstrate knowledge and skills through two inquiry cycles including self-reflection and self-assessment based on the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* on the *Description of Practice* (DOP). The program director communicates with district and site administrators regarding the unique needs of new teachers who will be participating in BTSA. The program director assigns the support providers to candidates based on site, grade level/content area, and team considerations.

Candidates demonstrate knowledge and skills through the *Plan, Teach, Reflect, Apply* (PTRA) cycle. With the assistance of a support provider, candidates also demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support all students effectively through their work with their Understanding by Design unit plan. These unit plans, as well as horizontal unit plans, serve as evidence that candidates are making progress towards development and demonstration of the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession*, *Induction Standard 5: Pedagogy*, and *Induction Standard 6: Universal Access*.

Support providers are selected based on well-defined criteria, including an unscheduled observation by the program director and district leadership. Support providers and candidates are matched based on site and grade/content area. Interviews show that candidates feel well supported in all aspects of completing the induction program.

The support provider assists the candidate in selecting meaningful action steps designed to improve the candidate's practice and subsequently improve student achievement. As the candidate progresses through their induction experience, the support provider crafts intentional post-observation conversations designed to stretch the teacher to a higher level of practice. These conversations are based on the work of Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman, from their book entitled Mentoring Matters. Support providers continually model the use of observation documentation data to more accurately determine the demonstrated level of practice in order to help the candidate more effectively understand the use of the *Description of Practice* assessments.

The program offers candidates additional professional development opportunities including the areas of technology, supporting English learners, and the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession*. State survey reports indicate that candidates have improved practice in a repertoire of teaching practices, managing the classroom, ensuring access to the curriculum for all students,

teaching to the content standards, teaching students with special needs, using technology as a tool, and using assessment data.

Standard 8: District-Employed Supervisors

District-employed supervisors are certified and experienced in either teaching the specified content or performing the services authorized by the credential. A process for selecting supervisors who are knowledgeable and supportive of the academic content standards for students is based on identified criteria. Supervisors are trained in supervision, oriented to the supervisory role, evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner.

Does not apply to Second Tier Credential Programs

Standard 9: Assessment of Candidate Competence

Standard Met

Candidates preparing to serve as professional school personnel know and demonstrate the professional knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support effectively all students in meeting the state-adopted academic standards. Assessments indicate that candidates meet the Commission-adopted competency requirements, as specified in the program standards.

Findings:

The Azusa Induction Program uses a four-inquiry based formative assessment system designed so that completion of the tools and subsequent submission of the portfolio becomes a complete demonstration of the professional knowledge and skills necessary to educate and effectively support students in meeting the state-adopted content standards as outlined in *Induction Standards 5: Pedagogy and 6: Universal Access*. Additionally, candidates attend, and demonstrate an understanding of, district-aligned professional development that focuses on improved teaching strategies such as EEEI and Understanding by Design, so they can more effectively teach the state-adopted academic content standards. Candidates submit their portfolios, consisting of all FACT formative assessment documents, a collection of evidence specific to the focus of each inquiry, and a synopsis detailing growth in practice over the two years in the induction program. These portfolios are reviewed by the program director.

Exit interviews provide candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their growth in practice, as outlined in the induction standards, during the two years of induction. The exit interview panel consists of the program director, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, and a cadre of support providers, who use a standardized assessment tool to ensure that each candidate meets the exit interview requirements. The district superintendent reports that she sits in on some of the interviews when asked to join. Graduates of the program described the exit interview as a culminating opportunity to showcase their learning, and professional and personal growth. The expectations for the portfolio and exit interview are clearly communicated to the candidates and include rubric language for teaching practices that would, or would not, meet these requirements.

Induction Program

Program Design

The Azusa Unified School District BTSA Induction Program incorporates a purposeful structure of extended preparation and professional development that prepares candidates to meet the academic learning needs of all K-12 students, as well as retain high quality teachers. The program provides individual support from qualified support providers, district and site level administrators, and professional development opportunities.

Interviews with candidates verified that they put the learning from their preliminary preparation program into practice, throughout the formative assessment process in the FACT system. During the process they self-assess, develop best teaching practices, and reflect upon their teaching practices, through the lens of student learning. *Individual Induction Plans (IIP)* are formulated by candidates with the guidance of their support providers to identify areas of both strength and growth. The four FACT modules are designed to focus on the CSTPs and Induction Standards as well as the *California Academic Content Standards for Students* and include gathering of evidence and self-assessing. Candidates customize instruction in their own classroom, in the manner which is most relevant to their practice. The teaching of English learners and special population students is embedded across the candidate practice, as evidenced in the Essential Elements of Effective Instruction (EEEI) program, utilized by all teachers in the district.

Interviews with candidates and support providers indicate that the reflective practices implemented within the FACT process cement best teaching practices and make them better teachers. One candidate commented on the opportunity to “evaluate what you are doing, focus on improving your practice, and delve into issues that may be problematic and how to solve them.” Site Administrators state that the program “sets up (candidates) for success as educators that are really prepared.” The program specialist assigned as the BTSA Induction program director oversees the AUSD BTSA Induction Program and manages the day-to-day requirements of the program. Continuous communication and regular collaboration with district and site administrators is evidenced through stakeholder interviews.

Candidates report that induction has given them the ability to apply pedagogical theory and allows them to recognize best practices in their delivery. One candidate commented that the components of BTSA are not just “something else,” but, rather, they are “embedded” in his everyday practice. District leadership indicates that a strong climate of collaboration exists in building a professional educational community of learners within the formative assessment process. One site administrator shared that the program “empowers” candidates towards growth and that the program director’s role “supports the work on campus.”

The impact of program modifications over recent years reveals changes have been made to assist candidates in reflecting on “where they were and where they are.” Issues with supporting English learners and utilizing technology have also been addressed, as evidenced by the employment of two content-expert professional development providers.

Application of the state adopted academic content standards and performance levels for all students is demonstrated by the candidates as they create a healthy environment for student learning, support equity and diversity, and use technology to advance student learning.

Interviews with candidates and support providers indicated that with a solid understanding of their student demographics, they are able to best serve the needs of their students. Stakeholders also reported that because the induction program has been constructed to meet the specific needs of the district, teachers are well equipped to deliver effective standards-based instruction.

A professional and educational community is established through continuous communication and regular collaboration by the Azusa Unified School District BTSA Induction Program with school district personnel, Human Resources staff, and site administrators. Induction staff has a process in place to ensure that all eligible teachers are identified and invited to participate in the induction program, starting with the credential analyst. Candidates reported that support providers and the program director are very supportive, offering assistance in a variety of methods, including e-mail, telephone calls, and face-to-face support. Expectations, deadlines, and required elements are clearly explained at multiple points throughout the program. District leaders, candidates and support providers, along with additional stakeholders, serve on the BTSA Induction Steering Committee. Members indicated that the collected data is shared and discussed to make program changes. Site administrators especially appreciated the opportunity to become familiar with the documentation.

Course of Study: Curriculum & Field Experience

The Azusa Unified School District BTSA Induction Program offers professional development opportunities by the program director. Additional professional development providers, who are selected, prepared, and assigned to work with candidates and support providers based on their background expertise and ability to teach the CSTP, are utilized as needed. The program director receives on-going professional development ensuring a knowledgeable grasp of the program. She is fully trained in formative assessment, and adult learning theory, and participates in ongoing training in all aspects of the BTSA Induction Program.

Support providers receive training in formative assessment, mentoring, the CSTP, and training for effective induction program practices. They attend a mandatory program orientation and receive follow-up professional development throughout the year. The program provides professional development for support providers to develop the knowledge and skills required to assist their candidates in the completion of the induction program. Candidates note that their support providers attend professional development with them and that they all “come together as a team.”

The Azusa Unified School District BTSA Induction Program uses the *Formative Assessment for California Teachers* (FACT) system for candidates. The series of FACT assessment modules focus teachers on a plan teach, reflect, and apply (PTRA) cycle, which underlies all activities in the FACT system. As candidates progress through each of the FACT modules, Context for Teaching and Learning, Assessment of Teaching and Learning, Inquiry into Teaching and Learning, and Summary of Teaching and Learning, they follow a delineated cycle of:

- Planning for instructional activities
- Teaching specific lessons or a series of lessons, and/or groups of students
- Reflecting upon that teaching experience; and
- Applying new knowledge to future practice.

FACT activities are aligned to the six *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* (CSTP), representing, in a comprehensive manner, the knowledge, skills, and abilities possessed by an accomplished teacher. Interviews with candidates confirmed that reflection on their practice improved student learning. One candidate felt that she was her “own self’s (best) observer.” Another candidate stated that all the work done is from the “angle of what is best for our students.” Candidates have multiple opportunities to learn and demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, and application of the CSTP over a two year period. Review of the candidates’ *Individual Induction Plan* (IIP) identifies a CSTP growth goal that assists the candidate and support provider to prepare a plan for professional learning, and a step-by-step implementation plan, which includes evidence, resources, and a completion date. The IIP guides the direction for professional development in at least one content area of focus.

Evidence of teaching practice, such as demonstration of BTSA Induction Standards work and student work samples, is collected over the two year induction period. Candidates’ teaching practice is measured against the *Descriptions of Practice* (DOP) enabling the candidates and support providers to collaboratively look at growth and practice over time. Reviews of the Azusa CSTP exit survey data, taken by the candidates at the end of the second year, informs the program design of professional development opportunities at the district level. The data identifies areas of strengths, interests, and needs in the context of their teaching assignment and is used to improve the induction program on an ongoing basis. Evidence shows that candidates found feedback from their support providers as most valuable and that there is a positive trend in the area of communication by program to candidate. One candidate commented that “there was never an instance of feeling lost” and that he always knew where to go for assistance. Program completers also stated that they knew their voices were heard and were able to see immediate improvements in the program as a result of their feedback.

Candidate Competence

To guide the candidates’ attainment of all program requirements, candidates are informed by the Induction staff at orientations and induction seminars about the FACT process and the components that allow for self-assessment throughout the two year induction process. Review of the Azusa Unified School District Induction Program documents shows that they maintain records for candidates and note progress and/or completion information. Support providers conduct formal and informal observations and provide detailed feedback to candidates about their practice in the framework of the CSTPs, on a regular basis, throughout the two years of induction. Interviews with candidates and support providers provided consistent evidence that candidates are knowledgeable about their assessments and meet with support providers to collaborate on assessment results. At the end of year two, the exit interview panel, consisting of the program director, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, and a cadre of support providers, conducts exit interviews with candidates, reviews all induction activities completed under each standard, and matches evidence against a completion form. Evidence shows the use of a standardized assessment tool to ensure that each candidate meets the exit interview requirements.

Within the formative assessment process, candidates have many opportunities to demonstrate knowledge of student growth and development, by creating lessons plans with appropriate accommodations and modifications to support students’ needs. Following observations, candidates collaboratively meet with support providers to discuss and assess their actual teaching practice and use of instructional strategies, as reflected by candidate’s lesson development and

delivery. Candidates reflect and self assess on their practice on the FACT conversation guides and the DOP against all elements of the six CSTP throughout the formative assessment process. Additionally, induction staff conducts continuing professional development district-wide on the Essential Elements of Effective Instruction (EEEI) program and the Understanding by Design (UbD) program. Review of program documents and candidates' portfolios verify that self assessment is documented throughout FACT on the DOP. During interviews, stakeholders have presented consistent evidence supporting the use of the FACT system as well as the EEEI and UbD programs.

Findings on Program Standards:

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, the completion of interviews with program leadership, district administrators, school site administrators, Human Resources personnel, support providers, candidates, completers, and Steering Committee members, the team determined that all program standards are fully **met** for the Azusa Unified School District BTSA Induction Program.